**UNIT 3 - AOS 1 MIND, BRAIN AND BODY**

**DOT POINT #2**

* **Concepts of normal waking consciousness and altered states of consciousness including:**

Daydreaming, meditative and alcohol-induced, in terms of levels of awareness, content limitations, controlled and automatic processes, perceptual and cognitive distortions, emotional awareness, self-control and time orientation

**Learning Intentions:**

1. Why is consciousness a psychological construct?
2. The difference between Normal Waking Consciousness (NWC) and Altered State of Consciousness (ASC), including the possible differences in each of the following characteristics:
   * 1. Level of awareness
     2. Controlled and automatic processes
     3. Content limitations
     4. Perceptual and Cognitive distortions
     5. Emotional awareness
     6. Self-control
     7. Time orientation
3. The reasons, in terms of the characteristics of consciousness, that each of the following is known as an altered state of consciousness:
   * 1. Daydreaming
     2. Meditation
     3. Alcohol-induced states
4. The ability to classify examples of a state of consciousness as NWC or ASC.

**Our level of awareness varies throughout the day. This dot point examines different States of Consciousness – from when you are alert, to being not fully aware or even lacking awareness altogether. Consciousness can deliberately be altered through activities such as meditation and the use of drugs such as alcohol or it can be naturally altered through activities such as daydreaming and sleep.**

Our level of awareness of internal events and external surroundings varies throughout the day (refer back to your snapshot of consciousness – how many different types of thoughts did you have in 5 minutes?)

In any day you will have times when you are alert and others when you are drowsy. Consciousness can be thought of as operating on a continuum from a high level of consciousness or awareness through to the point of being unconscious (being totally unaware). The more aware we are of our thoughts, feelings, perceptions and surroundings, the higher the level of consciousness.

The level of awareness of internal events and external surroundings is known as **state of consciousness (SOC).**

**The continuum of awareness**

**Normal Waking Consciousness Altered States of Consciousness**

During **NWC,** we experience a real sense of time and place. We understand where we are, what we are doing, when we are doing it and why we are doing it. Our experience during normal waking consciousness creates our reality and forms a baseline against which to judge all other states of consciousness. If we deviate from this normal baseline, we experience an **ASC.** Therefore, an ASC can be defined as any state that deviates from NWC, in terms of marked differences in:

* Level of awareness
* Perceptions, memories, thinking, emotions and behaviours
* Sense of time and place
* Self-control

This could include states produced by the learnt technique of meditation, psychological drugs (e.g alcohol), fever, psychosis, day dreaming and sleep.

ASC are often culturally significant and can occur through religious experiences.

ASC can be induced DELIBERATELY or OCCUR NATURALLY

**INVESTIGATION:**

**Homer’s Altered State of Consciousness**

Probably the easiest way to understand the characteristics of NWC is to consider the characteristics of ASC.

Watch the first 5 minutes of The Simpsons Season 14 Episode 2:

“How I spent my Strummer Vacation”

1. Make a list of the various ways Homer tried to alter his state of consciousness. Categorise these altered states of consciousness as *drug-induced or* *non-drug-induced.*
2. List the various effects that Homer experienced while in an altered state of consciousness. Categorise these changes in terms of:
   1. Perception – sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste
   2. Thinking – including problem-solving, reasoning and understanding
   3. Memory
   4. Emotions
   5. Behaviours – including self-control, coordination, balance and speech
   6. Perception of time – e.g. understanding the amount of time that has passed
   7. Awareness of the environment
3. Discuss how these changes in an altered state of consciousness compare to the characteristics of normal waking consciousness.

**Summary of Learning Activities to be completed**

**Are you Ready? – Topic #1**

**From dot point #1**

1. Learning Activity 2.1 – a snapshot of your consciousness
2. Mind-body Problem

**From dot point #2**

1. Draw images for each of the levels of awareness
2. Learning Activity 2.2 p.104– Recognising different states of consciousness
3. Activity 3 – NWC and ASC – an application task (correct it!!!)
4. Learning Activity 2.4 p.105 – Media Response – read article and view video.
5. Learning Activity 2.3 p.105 – Review Questions
6. INVESTIGATION: Homer’s Altered State of Consciousness